

Message Text

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ORIGIN EB-07

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 L-03 JUSE-00 FTC-01 SEC-01

AID-05 CIAE-00 COME-00 FRB-01 INR-07 NSAE-00 USIA-15

TRSE-00 XMB-04 OPIC-06 SP-02 CIEP-02 LAB-04 SIL-01

OMB-01 CEA-01 EA-09 IO-11 NEA-10 /104 R

DRAFTED BY EB/CSB/BP:WBLOCKWOOD:VJW

APPROVED BY EB/CSB/BP:HJWINTER

L/EB - JCROOK

EUR/NE - KKURZE

EUR/RPE - RBRESSLER (INFO)

JUSTICE DROSENTHAL

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R 101723Z MAR 76

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY BONN

USMISSION USBERLIN

INFO USMISSION OECD PARIS

UNCLAS STATE 058163

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ETRD, FRG

SUBJECT: ANTITRUST: PRINTING PRESS MANUFACTURERS

1. THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE NOTIFIED THE DEPARTMENT ON
MARCH 5 OF THE FOLLOWING ANTITRUST INVESTIGATION:

QTE - THE ANTITRUST DIVISION IS CONDUCTING AN INVESTIGATION OF POSSIBLE CARTEL-LIKE ARRANGEMENTS IN THE DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL PRINTING PRESS MANUFACTURING AND DISTRIBUTING INDUSTRY. THAT INDUSTRY HAS SEVERAL SECTORS. ONE SUCH SECTOR IS THAT OF LITHOGRAPHIC SHEETFED PRESSES, WHICH ARE THE PRESSES COMMONLY USED BY THOUSANDS OF
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UNITED STATES COMMERCIAL PRINTING ESTABLISHMENTS. A

LARGE MAJORITY OF SUCH PRESSES SOLD IN THE UNITED STATES ARE IMPORTED FROM FOREIGN COUNTRIES, ESPECIALLY FROM GERMANY. THE LEADING GERMAN MANUFACTURERS ARE HEIDELBERGER DRUCKMASCHINEN A.G., MASCHINENFABRIK AUGSBURG-NURNBERG A.G., AND ROLAND OFFSETMASCHINENFABRIK FABER AND SCHLEICHER A.G. THE LAST NAMED CORPORATION IS MAJORITY CONTROLLED BY MASCHINENFABRIK AUGSBURG-NURNBERG A.G., WHICH IN TURN IS A SUBSIDIARY OF GUTEHOFFNUNGSHUTTE AKTIENVEREIN. JUST RECENTLY, MASCHINENFABRIK-NURNBERG A.G. ACQUIRED A PART INTEREST IN ONE OF ONLY TWO EXISTING

UNITED STATES PRODUCERS OF SHEETFEED LITHOGRAPHIC PRESSES; THUS, JUST ONE SUCH DOMESTIC PRODUCER REMAINS INDEPENDENT.

IN ADDITION TO THAT ACQUISITION, WE HAVE SOME INDICATIONS THAT VARIOUS RESTRICTIVE ARRANGEMENTS MAY HAVE BEEN MADE AMONG MEMBERS OF THE INDUSTRY, CONCERNING LITHOGRAPHIC SHEETFEED AND POSSIBLY OTHER TYPES OF PRESSES.

QTE - WE PROPOSE TO ISSUE CIVIL INVESTIGATIVE DEMANDS TO A NUMBER OF UNITED STATES MANUFACTURERS AND DISTRIBUTORS OF PRINTING PRESSES, SEEKING CERTAIN TYPES OF DOCUMENTS. AT THE SAME TIME, WE EXPECT TO SEND LETTERS TO THE FOUR GERMAN CORPORATIONS NAMED ABOVE, REQUESTING THAT THEY MAKE AVAILABLE THE SAME TYPES OF DOCUMENTS ON A VOLUNTARY BASIS. IN ESSENCE, THESE DOCUMENTS WOULD BE AGREEMENTS AND RELATED DOCUMENTS CONTAINING OR REFERRING TO PRICE, TERRITORIAL, OR OTHER RESTRICTIONS. UNQTE

2. PURSUANT TO OECD PROCEDURES, THE EMBASSY IS REQUESTED TO NOTIFY APPROPRIATE FRG OFFICIALS, AND U.S. MISSION BERLIN THE FEDERAL CARTEL OFFICE, OF THIS INVESTIGATION, AND REPORT ANY SIGNIFICANT REACTIONS. KISSINGER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ANTITRUST, INVESTIGATIONS, CARTELS, PRESSES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 10 MAR 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976STATE058163
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: WBLOCKWOOD:VJW
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760091-0780
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760374/aaaacnqa.tel
Line Count: 94
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN EB
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ShawDG
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 26 AUG 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <26 AUG 2004 by meiwc>; APPROVED <09 DEC 2004 by ShawDG>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ANTITRUST: PRINTING PRESS MANUFACTURERS
TAGS: ETRD, GE, US
To: BONN
USBERLIN
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006